

We claim:

1. A customer acquisition method comprising the steps of:

selecting a customer account record of a first entity, said customer account record

including a customer identifier;

determining if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a customer of  
a second entity; and

providing an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if said  
individual becomes a customer of said second entity.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining whether said  
individual satisfies predefined criteria for receiving said acquisition offer.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined criteria includes geographic  
conditions.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined criteria includes demographic  
conditions.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined criteria includes financial  
conditions.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said customer account record further indicates an  
amount due and said method further comprises the step of determining whether said amount due  
satisfies predefined criteria for receiving said acquisition offer.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said amount due is less than or equal to a  
maximum amount specified by said second entity.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said individual must agree to remain a customer  
2 of said second entity for a predefined minimum period of time.

Sub B 1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein said acquisition offer is provided to said  
2 individual in a billing statement of said first entity.

B 1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining if said  
2 customer has accepted said ~~acquisition~~ offer.

Sub B 1 11. A customer acquisition system comprising:  
2 a memory for storing a customer account record of a first entity, said customer  
3 account record including a customer identifier;  
4 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to:  
5 select a customer account record;  
6 determine if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a customer of a  
7 second entity; and  
8 provide an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if said individual  
9 becomes a customer of said second entity.

Sub B 1 12. A customer acquisition system comprising:  
2 means for selecting a customer account record of a first entity, said customer  
3 account record including a customer identifier;  
4 means for determining if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a  
5 customer of a second entity; and  
6 means for providing an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if  
7 said individual becomes a customer of said second entity.

Sub B 1 13. An article of manufacture comprising:  
2 a computer readable medium having computer readable code means embodied  
3 thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:

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4 a step to select a customer account record of a first entity, said customer account  
6 record including a customer identifier;

7 a step to determine if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a  
7 customer of a second entity; and

8 a step to provide an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if said  
9 individual becomes a customer of said second entity.

sub. A3  
1 14. A customer acquisition method comprising the steps of:  
2 establishing predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an individual  
3 provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and  
4 providing said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine whether said  
5 second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein said predefined conditions are selected from the  
2 group consisting of geographic conditions, demographic conditions, financial conditions and a  
3 maximum offer amount.

1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein said individual owes an amount due to said  
2 second entity and wherein said amount due is less than or equal to a maximum amount.

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1 17. The method of claim 14, wherein said individual must agree to remain a customer  
2 of said <sup>first entity</sup> service provider for a predefined minimum period of time.

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1 18. The method of claim 14, wherein said ~~acquisition~~ offer is provided to said  
2 individual in a billing statement of said second entity.

sub. A4  
1 19. A customer acquisition system comprising:  
2 a memory for storing a customer account records;  
3 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to:

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4 establish predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an individual  
5 provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and  
6 communicate said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine whether  
7 said second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

1 20. A customer acquisition system comprising:  
2 means for establishing predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an  
3 individual provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and  
4 means for communicating said predefined conditions to a second entity to  
5 determine whether said second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

1 21. An article of manufacture comprising:  
2 a computer readable medium having computer readable code means embodied  
3 thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:  
4 a step to establish predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an  
5 individual provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and  
6 a step to communicate said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine  
7 whether said second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

1 22. A method for paying an amount due indicated on a billing statement, comprising  
2 the steps of:  
3 receiving an acquisition offer to have at least a portion of said amount due paid by  
4 a third party in exchange for becoming a customer of said third party;  
5 indicating acceptance of said acquisition offer for said third party to pay at least a  
6 portion of said amount due; and  
7 becoming a customer of said third party.

1 23. The method of claim 22, wherein said amount due is less than or equal to a  
2 maximum amount specified by said ~~second entity~~ <sup>third party</sup>

1 24. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of agreeing to become a  
2 customer of said third party for a predefined minimum period of time.

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1 25. The method of claim 22, wherein said ~~acquisition~~ offer is provided in a billing  
2 statement.

1 26. The method of claim 22, wherein said step of indicating acceptance further  
2 comprises the step of utilizing acceptance indicia on said billing statement.

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